

WASHINGTON, DC – (Today) - Led by Reps. Michael Honda (CA-15) and Edolphus Towns (NY-10), the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and Congressional Hispanic Caucuses (CHC) seek to establish a federal strategy to educate minority communities to prevent, treat, and manage viral hepatitis. Asian American, Pacific Islander, and African American communities are disproportionately affected by hepatitis B& C infection.

“Chronic Hepatitis B and C are silent killers,” said Honda, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. “It is time for Congress to stop the silence and educate vulnerable communities as well as the general public. Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders have a much higher prevalence rate of hepatitis B and develop liver cancer at a much higher rate than other ethnic groups. Tragically, few in our communities are aware of their risk factors or about how to manage or treat the disease. This timely report bolsters our efforts to pass H.R. 3974.”

“Chronic Hepatitis B and C are among the many conditions that have a disproportionate and detrimental impact on racial and ethnic minorities. This report will play a pivotal role in raising greater awareness about viral hepatitis among and within the very communities that are the hardest hit,” noted Congresswoman Donna Christensen, a physician and Co-Chair of the CBC Health and Wellness Task Force.

“The disproportionate rates of Hepatitis B and C infections in minority communities underscore the critical need for increased prevention strategies, as well as the importance of health reform that guarantees access to culturally and linguistically competent prevention services for all communities across America. We simply cannot afford to have a health care system that allows preventable diseases like Hepatitis B and C to exact such a huge personal and economic toll in communities of color,” said Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, Chair of the CHC Health Task Force.

Viral Hepatitis B and C are highly contagious blood borne viruses that cause liver disease, liver cancer, and premature death. An estimated 5.3 million people living in the United States are infected with either hepatitis B or hepatitis C; tragically more than half are unaware of their

status.

IOM's report makes detailed recommendations on how to reduce new infections, improve current prevention and control activities, and identify priorities for research, policy, and action, among other recommendations.

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The Congressional Tri-Caucus includes the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. The objectives of the Congressional Tri-Caucus are to promote the public health and well-being through legislative action, social outreach, and political engagement. To this end, the Tri-Caucus seeks to preserve our Nation's commitment to fair and equitable treatment to all Americans. The Tri-Caucus has worked together for over a decade to ensure that the Congressional legislative agenda reflects the health challenges of all Americans.